/110 cont./

771 182 797 177 It is certain that, because of the different circumstances under which they proceeded, the religious acculturation of the Guaranĺ at the time of the Missions and that of the present day differ radically from each other. In the former case there really was a conversion, even though secondarily, after the expulsion of the Jesuits, the two systems disappearing into a syncretic whole through the encounter of points of contact (ethos of Christianity as a redemptive religion and the total convergence of the life of the Guaranĺ toward the problems of the Beyond), while in the latter case, because of the absence of systematic indoctrination, isolated elements were assimilated, without their religious significance being apprehended at the same time, for which reason different functions fell to them, whether magical, medicinal, recreational, or of social distinction.

771 184 One fact which causes no little difficulty for an exact description of the Guaranĺ religion of the groups now existing in Brazil, both as regards the doctrine and as regards the ritual, is the extraordinary variability observed from village to village, from one doctor-sorcerer to another, even among the representatives of the same group. The systematization of the elements would, by itself, give rise to an extensive monograph. The divergences and contradictions, even within this or that subgroup, this or that village, are so numerous and accentuated in such a way that it becomes practically impossible to present the tribal religion in peremptory or "dogmatic" formulations. There seems to be two causes for this:

771 781 184 First, the individual, or better, individualistic character of the Guaranĺ religion. Outstanding though the social importance of the religious ceremonies and, conversely, the religious significance of the principal manifestations of the community existence may be, one must never underestimate the extraordinary role of the individual religious experience, for under any circumstances a person may come in contact with the supernatural, receiving consolation, advice, and revelations from the divinities, or the protector-spirits, that is, each one has his own religious experiences, according to the character and mystical inclinations of his personality.

/147 cont./

771 religious significance and function, but given a magical, medici-
177 nal, or even economic stamp. In the second phase, religious
178 elements are accepted as such, i.e., with reference to the prob-
lems of the supernatural, but reinterpreted in terms of the reli-
gious system of the tribe, through the establishment of analogies
of form. In the third phase, the final and decisive one, the tra-
ditional religious system is shaken in its foundations by the pre-
dominance of foreign elements integrated in it. This last phase
is hardly reached by any Guaraní community while it maintains a
minimum of social cohesion, and by isolated individuals only
after their total detribalization (20).

20. /From p. 152 of the original source./ On this point see also Schaden, 1955, a work in which are likewise discussed, in a summary way, some other aspects of Guaraní religious acculturation.

771 Undoubtedly contributing to the high degree of resistance of the
781 Guaraní religion, even after the /148/ destruction of a large part
787 of the ties of group solidarity, was the fact that, although highly
182 collective in a good part of its manifestations, it is also an emi-
nently familial and even individual religion, by virtue of the
importance attributed to the supernatural experiences and events
in the life of the individual for obtaining his ideal of life. /The notes for Ch. VIII appear on pp. 148-152 in the original source./